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Reply to Office Action of December 7, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) For use in a vehicle wheel rim, a grommet and valve stem assembly, the assembly comprising:

a grommet having;

a nose section at a first end of the grommet, the nose having a substantially conical shape configured for insertion into an inflation hole in the vehicle wheel rim;

a cylindrical section sized to match the inflation hole and having a first end adjoined to the nose section;

a flange section projecting radially outward from a second end of the cylindrical section, the flange section having a substantially flat surface opposite to the cylindrical section, wherein at least one interface seal is formed on the flat surface as a hemispherical projection located concentrically about a center axis of the grommet; and

an axial bore passing centrally through the grommet body; and

a valve stem configured to be inserted through the bore of the grommet, the valve stem comprising a threaded portion configured to receive a retaining nut and a flange having a substantially flat surface that is configured to form at least one sealing interface with the at least one interface seal when the retaining nut is tightened to the valve stem.

- 2. (Original) The assembly of claim 1 wherein the grommet comprises a synthetic rubber.
- 3. (Original) The assembly of claim 1 further comprising an annular section located between a base of the nose section and the cylindrical section, the annular section projecting radially outward from the base of the nose section.

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4. (Original) The assembly of claim 3 wherein at least one further sealing interface is formed between the annular section of the grommet and a recess in the retaining nut assembly when the retaining nut is tightened to the valve stem.

- 5. (Original) The assembly of claim 1 wherein at least one further sealing interface is formed between the cylindrical section and an inner surface of the inflation hole when the retaining nut is tightened.
- 6. (Original) The assembly of claim 3 wherein the at least one further sealing interface is formed between the annular section and an outside surface of the wheel rim.
- 7. (Original) The assembly of claim 1 wherein the retaining nut further comprises a flat seal and at least one further sealing interface is formed between the flat seal and an outside surface of the vehicle wheel rim.
- 8. (Original) The assembly of claim 7 wherein the at least one sealing interface provides an electrically insulative path between the valve stem and the vehicle wheel rim.
- 9. (Original) A method of reducing air leakage at a vehicle tire valve stem and grommet assembly, the method comprising:

inserting a grommet into an inflation hole, the grommet comprising:

a nose section at a first end of the grommet, the nose having a substantially conical shape configured for insertion into an inflation hole in the vehicle wheel rim;

a cylindrical section sized to match the inflation hole and having a first end adjoined to the nose section;

a flange section projecting radially outward from a second end of the cylindrical section, the flange section having a substantially flat surface opposite to the

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cylindrical section, wherein at least one interface seal is formed on the flat surface as a hemispherical projection located concentrically about a center axis of the grommet; and

an axial bore passing centrally through the grommet body; and inserting a valve stem through the bore, the valve stem comprising:

a threaded portion configured to receive a retaining nut; and

a flange having a substantially flat surface that is configured to form at least one sealing interface with the at least one interface seal when the retaining nut is tightened to the valve stem; and

tightening the retaining nut on the valve stem.

- 10. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein the grommet further comprises an annular section located between a base of the nose section and the cylindrical section, the annular section projecting radially outward from the base of the nose section.
- 11. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein at least one further sealing interface is formed between the annular section of the grommet and a recess in the retaining nut assembly when the retaining nut is tightened to the valve stem.
- 12. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein at least one further sealing interface is formed between the cylindrical section and an inner surface of the inflation hole when the retaining nut is tightened.
- 13. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the at least one further sealing interface is formed between the annular section and an outside surface of the wheel rim.
- 14. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein the retaining nut further comprises a flat seal and at least one further sealing interface is formed between the flat seal and an outside surface of the vehicle wheel rim.

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15. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein the at least one sealing interface provides an electrically insulative path between the valve stem and the vehicle wheel rim.

- 16. (Currently Amended) A grommet for use in a wheel rim inflation hole, the grommet comprising:
- a nose section at a first end of the grommet, the nose having a substantially conical shape configured to be inserted into the inflation hole;

an annular section at a base of the nose section, the annular section projecting radially outward from the base of the nose section;

a cylindrical section sized to match the inflation hole and having a first end adjoined to the annular section;

a flange section projecting radially outward from a second end of the cylindrical section, the flange section having a substantially flat surface opposite to the cylindrical section, wherein at least one interface seal is formed on the flat surface as a hemispherical projection; and

a bore passing axially through the grommet body, the bore configured to receive a valve stem assembly.

- 17. (Original) The grommet of claim 16 wherein the grommet comprises a synthetic rubber.
- 18. (Original) The grommet of claim 16 wherein at least one sealing interface is formed between the cylindrical section of the grommet and an inner surface of the tire inflation hole.
- 19. (Original) The grommet of claim 16 wherein at least one sealing interface is formed between the flange section of the grommet and an inside surface of the wheel rim.

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20. (Original) The grommet of claim 16 wherein at least one sealing interface is formed between the annular section of the grommet and an outside surface of the wheel rim.